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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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ARTICLE I.

NOTICE OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF WILLIAM WATSON.

BY THE EDITOR.

Our readers will naturally expect an apology for the delay of the present number of this work to this late hour. Early in November, we had the manuscript in a course of preparation, and it would soon have been ready for the press, but a sudden dispensation of Divine Providence arrested our progress. William Watson, the founder, proprietor, and publisher of the work, was suddenly summoned from the scene of his devoted labours in the cause of peace, to enter into his eternal rest.

It thus became necessary for the Executive Committee of the American Peace Society, to make new arrangements for the publication of the work, before it could proceed. Such is our apology—satisfactory as such, no doubt, to all ; but to some, fraught with suggestions of a melancholy interest.

Those who were personally acquainted with Mr. Watson will be deeply sensible how much undaunted resolution, perse-

vering effort, and self-denying industry, will be required to repair his loss. It would be an act of unfaithfulness to the cause which it is the design of this work to promote, as well as of injustice to the memory of Mr. Watson, should we suffer the occasion of again appearing before the public to pass without a word in regard to his life and character.

William Watson, born at East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1774, was the son of a successful merchant of that place, and embraced his father's profession, which he followed at Enfield, Suffield, and ultimately in this city.

At the age of twelve years, he was the subject of deep religious impressions; the seeds of religious character seem to have been implanted in his mind at that early period, and though he was exposed to many trials and temptations, they remained there, acquiring strength and vigour to spring up, in due time, into a more fully developed maturity. Thus early was he furnished with that inner grace which subdueth the heart, ordereth the passions, and ministereth heavenly consolation to the soul in the hour of tribulation; and in him it well performed all these offices.

Having acquired a handsome capital, he engaged largely in importations from Europe, and in 1816, and 1818, visited England in the capacity of an importer. Unforeseen changes in the commercial world, caused these importations to result in heavy pecuniary misfortune, a thing grievous to be borne for the present, but working out through the grace of God, the peaceable fruits of righteousness. This event gave a new direction to the life of Mr. Watson, transferring the enterprize, industry and promptitude of his commercial character, to the work of Christian benevolence, here to be employed in gaining, not the corruptible, but the incorruptible—treasures not of earth, but of heaven.

Mr. Watson possessed more than most men, some of the most prominent traits of the *true* mercantile character. Wherever he was known, he was known for integrity, accuracy, love of order, and exact punctuality. For punctuality he

was proverbial. Rarely have we heard his name mentioned among men of business, without allusion to his punctuality. It seemed to be an innate element in his character—and so sensitive was he on the subject, that the least seeming departure from the strict rule, never failed to bring from him an apology. And if, in any case, circumstances beyond his control compelled him to defer the time of fulfilling an engagement, we are witnesses to the poignant regrets which he manifested. It was as if nature had received an irritating wound—refusing to close and heal, till the cause should be removed.

These qualities—of integrity, accuracy, order, punctuality, if not the shining qualities which excite admiration, are yet the enduring ones on which the stability, regularity, and harmony of society, depend; they go far towards making their possessor a man of justice,—and a man of justice is well fitted to be a man of peace.

We have alluded to the altered direction of Mr. Watson's life, occasioned by the change in his commercial prospects. In 1819, the Temperance Reformation was in its incipient stages. Mr. Watson, who did not measure an enterprise by its present progress, nor estimate its importance by the standard of popular favour, enlisted in this cause, with a purpose which no opposition nor obloquy could discourage, with a zeal which no indifference could damp. For nine years, through evil report and through good report, he persevered in humble, self-denying labours for its promotion; leaving it when now advanced, and regarded with favourable eye—again to enter upon a course of self denying labour in another cause, promising, perhaps, less violent opposition and obloquy, but not less indifference, coldness, and discouragement.

In 1828, Mr. William Ladd delivered a lecture in this city, on the subject of peace and war. The style and manner of Mr. Ladd delighted Mr. Watson, and the nature of the enterprise to promote universal and permanent peace, now, for the first time, fully opened to his mind, seemed to impart a new enthusiasm to his character, to give a new spring of action to his life. Returning home from the lecture, he expressed to his

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family the pleasure which it had afforded him, with the air and the manner of one who has at length found his congenial element. From that time forth, for the cause of peace he lived, and laboured, and in the midst of efforts to promote it, he died.

It is not too much to say, that he did more for the promotion of this cause than any other individual in the State, and than all, except a very few individuals, in the United States. His labours embraced an infinitude of details—which it would be impossible to relate. Of several peace societies he managed the fiscal concerns—and all the societies in the different counties of the State, were supplied with tracts and publications, either by him directly, or through his agency. The County Societies he visited in person, made excursions into different parts of the State, for objects connected with the cause of peace, procured addresses on the subject, to be delivered, published these addresses, as well as various pamphlets and tracts, opened a depository from which they might be distributed—conversed on the principles and objects of Peace Societies, whenever and wherever fitting occasion presented—in a word, he lost no opportunity, great or small, to promote the cause to which his whole soul was devoted. Thus his influence, silent and unseen, had extended itself much more widely than was generally supposed. An agent of the American Peace Society for the county of Tolland, Conn., in a recent communication to the Executive Committee, remarks:—"I found that the publications of the American Peace Society had exerted an influence beyond my expectation. The persevering efforts of the beloved WATSON, had thrown some tract, or report, into every neighbourhood, and his name was familiar on many tongues."

When, in 1831, the Connecticut Peace Society was established, Mr. Watson was appointed its agent, and by him the business of the society was transacted, and its publications issued and distributed. To his enterprize, personal efforts and sacrifices, this journal, commenced under the auspices of the Connecticut Peace Society, but subsequently transferred to those of the American, mainly owes its existence. During the two

years and a half since its first establishment, it occupied his thoughts almost unceasingly, and to its publication, support, and circulation, his time was almost entirely devoted. The same spirit of perseverance, and self-sacrifice which characterized him in other things, was gradually leading him towards the accomplishment of his hopes in reference to this work. Late in October last, he undertook a journey to New-York and Philadelphia, in behalf of the American Peace Society ; his purpose was to lay the objects and claims of that society before the friends of the cause in those cities, and to solicit their cooperation. Having met with a very cordial reception, and satisfactorily accomplished his object, he was returning, when he was violently attacked with an inflammatory fever. He was, however, enabled to reach his home, where he languished about ten days, and then, at the age of 63, calmly and confidently departed to his rest.

The ruling passion of his life, if we may so express it, was also that of his last hours ;—the cause of peace seemed to dwell upon his mind, and was the leading theme of his conversation. A friend who was about to pray with him, inquired if he had any especial subject of petition. He replied, pray for two things ; first, that I may enjoy the presence of my Saviour and *particularly* that God will be pleased to bless my recent exertions in the cause of peace. For other friends he left his solemn injunction, that if the cause for which he had laboured was worthy of support, they would not suffer it to languish.

We cannot close this sketch without again adverting to Mr. Watson's character. Religion seemed to be in him not so much an emotion as a habit. Beginning in early youth, it grew up with him, and was interwoven with the whole tissue of his life. He had a prevailing sense of the obligations of right—of dependence on a higher power—and of the agency of a Divine Providence in every event. To him the rule of action was not so much the rule of *sight* as of *faith*. He went to the fountain of wisdom for guidance, and having formed his purpose, clung to it with an invincible tenacity. Obstacles, and perplexities sometimes cast a damp over his spirits, but it was

momentary ; the ultimate effect was only to make him more determined than before. He highly esteemed the good opinion of his friends, he was by no means insensible to public regard,—but he chose to sacrifice them both, if necessary, rather than abate one whit of his resolution. Especially was this true in reference to the cause to which he devoted the eight last years of his life. He enlisted in that cause from a conviction of its intrinsic merits—and at a time when it was almost without visible encouragement. We know not that he ever had any express reference to the following maxims of an eloquent friend of peace, but they were in fact his governing maxims. We know not that the author of them had ever seen Mr. Watson, but he could not have better described his rule of action, from the most intimate acquaintance. “If it be a duty,” says Professor Ware, “which we are called upon to perform, it is no matter whether there be any visible encouragement or not. Duty can be done, sooner or later. It must be begun,—in the dark perhaps ; but we shall work our way to the light.” In this conviction Mr. Watson laboured, “that he should work his way to the light.” Shall we misinterpret the signs of the times, if we say that he lived to behold the dawn approaching, here below, before he opened his eyes upon the full and resplendent light above ?

We are aware how some are accustomed to regard a course of conduct based upon such maxims ; to them it seems enthusiasm ; they call it delusion ; they smile upon it perhaps as innocent, but pity it as very profitless. This is perfectly natural. It is the manner of an hireling to estimate every thing upon principles of profit and loss ; and in making up his balance, to look at that which is *seen*, forgetting the mighty power which is unseen. He cannot come up to the comprehension of a character based upon the sublime principle of faith. He is down—down—very far below—and in the dark. We envy not the principles of such men ; we return their pity ; and we pray them that while they look upon the things that are seen and temporal, they do not forget the things that are unseen and eternal.—We do not say that the subject of this notice was

without fault ; that he never committed an error in judgment, but we do say, that the general rule which he followed, " the question of duty *once settled*, no matter whether there be any visible encouragement or not," is a sound rule. It is the principle of faith which makes the weak, strong—and which, though small like a grain of mustard seed, shall enable the possessor to remove mountains.

Other traits of Mr. Watson's character, were humility, patience, and calm forbearance under irritation and injury. We are not acquainted with his early developments of disposition, but we have reason to regard these qualities in him as not so much the effect of natural temper, as of religious principle. Indeed, we are inclined to the opinion, that natural temper would have formed in him a very different character, had it not been subdued and regulated by religious influence. In his later years, probably, this influence operated in a two fold way—it led him to engage in the cause of peace, and as a result of so doing, he saw more clearly and felt more deeply the force of its peculiar principles. His composure under circumstances of irritation and injury, was remarkable, and rarely if ever disturbed. It is a peculiar beauty of the principle of benevolence, that it is not exhausted by its operation upon others, but reacts on the possessor with most beneficent influence. He that does good to others, does a greater good to himself—it is more blessed to give than to receive. As they that take the sword, perish by the sword, so they that are makers of peace shall themselves partake in the fruits of peace.

As we looked upon the lifeless features of our departed friend, as we followed his mortal remains to the grave, and saw them slowly and silently deposited there ; as we beheld the bursting tear of conjugal and of filial affection as they stood upon its verge to take the last farewell look, and with hurried footstep retired as in anguish from the scene, we could not avoid being deeply impressed with the solemnities of death. We fervently wished that every individual cherishing hatred

in his heart, or feeling the taunts of insult rising upon his tongue, or even in the act of uttering an unkind word to wound the feelings of a fellow mortal, could suddenly realize the solemnities of such an hour ; remembering the time to be rapidly approaching when he too must return to dust, and his spirit ascend to the tribunal of its Maker. Obdurate as iron must be the heart which would not then relent ;—insensible as marble the soul which would not learn from the grave a lesson of fraternal love. From the grave of a man of peace, our thoughts involuntarily recurred to that of the man of war. We saw the carnage of the field of battle—foe fallen against foe in countless multitude, with gashed and ghastly visages—the features distorted in the last solemn moment, with the rage and fury of the conflict. Each of these fallen men had been enticed, perhaps, forced, from the circle of domestic sympathy and affection, to enact on that field, a tragedy more direful than that of demons :

“O shame to men, devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds, men only disagree
Of creatures rational, tho’ under hope
Of heavenly grace :”—

Could the departed spirits, thus suddenly and violently ushered into the dread realities of the unseen world, alternately return to animate anew their weltering corpses ; could each fallen foe suddenly rise from his ghastly slumber, and look upon the face of his antagonist, and behold his own work—with what other cries than those of rage and battle, would that field resound !

Within a short period, five of the most distinguished leaders in the cause of peace have left their work on earth and gone to their reward. First, the beloved **GKIMKE**, foremost in the ranks of whatever cause he had espoused ; next, **BEVANS**, the Secretary of the London Peace Society and Editor of the *Herald of Peace* ; then the much lamented **DAVIS**, pastor of the Baptist church in this city, a member of the Executive Committee of the American Peace Society ; more recently another member of the same Committee, the indefatigable—the devoted **WATSON** ; and last, the President of the Windham County

Peace Society, the venerable **BENSON**. These men have gone ; the hollow, sepulchral tone of warning and exhortation arises from their tomb ; but in the charities which they laboured to promote, in the impulses which they imparted, in the energy of their example, they live, and will live, until the sound of strife shall cease, and the noise of battle be no longer heard upon the earth.

ARTICLE II.

THE OBJECT OF PEACE SOCIETIES PRACTICABLE.

BY WILLIAM M. HOLLAND, PROFESSOR IN WASHINGTON COLLEGE, HARTFORD.

THE good natured indifference, with which superficial observers regard the efforts of the friends of peace, would be to those who are engaged in those efforts, a source of amusement, if they could permit themselves to be amused in a matter so serious. The operations of war are so grand, terrific and startling, and the efforts of peace-makers so quiet and unobtrusive, that to those who look only at the surface of things, nothing appears to be more futile than any attempt to counteract the former by the latter. The historian records that all ages and nations have been stained with blood ; the philosopher observes the furious passions inherent in man ; the theologian reflects on his depravity of heart ; the phrenologist examines his combative organs, and all agree that he was born to fight, and that any efforts to restrain the tendency of his mischief-making propensities, are little short of insanity. War, to be sure, is a great evil ; all know it to be so ; but then there must be wars ; men will fight ; nations will disagree ; monarchs will be covetous, and unjust, and oppressive ; human nature is always the same ; wars have always raged and always will rage, until a miraculous influence from heaven shall bring on the glorious era of the millennium. What then can a few voluntary asso-